

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals:**

English Language Fellow and Specialist Program for Academic Year (AY) 2015-2016

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAALW-15-001

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.421

**Application Deadline:** May 30, 2014

**Executive Summary:**

The Office of English Language Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for proposals to advance the Bureau's objectives through support of academic exchanges that will result in the improvement of English teaching capacity around the world and the enhancement of mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries through exchanges of U.S. English language educators to all regions of the world.

The EL Fellow and Specialist Program sends talented, highly qualified U.S. citizens in the area of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or a related field on programs at educational institutions in all regions of the world for time periods ranging from 10 days to 10 months. Through U.S. embassy-designed projects, Fellows and Specialists share their expertise, hone their skills, gain international experience, and learn about other cultures. Upon returning to the United States, they share their experiences and acquired knowledge with their communities and professional colleagues. Projects are carried out with host-country ministries of education, universities, teacher-training

institutions, NGOs, binational centers, and other English language teaching institutions. Participant activities support the integration of all U.S. Embassy program resources contributing to a country-wide English language strategy.

Pending the availability of Fiscal Year 2015 funds, the Bureau anticipates the placement of approximately 120 Fellows, 120 Specialists, and 50 post-funded Fellows and Specialists overseas in Academic Year 2015-2016. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code, Section 26 U.S.C 501 (c) (3) may submit proposals to administer and manage the EL Fellow and Specialist Program for AY 2015-2016.

### **Background**

The Bureau seeks to award a Cooperative Agreement to an applicant with the ability to achieve these objectives and that has the necessary infrastructure and experience conducting academic exchange programs. The timing of the award and the amount of funding for the EL Fellow and Specialist Program are subject to the availability of funds in FY 2015.

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description:**

**Authority:**

Overall Grant and Agreement-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Purpose:**

The overarching goals of the EL Fellow and Specialist Program are to:

- advance the Department of State's mutual understanding objectives;
- enhance English teaching capacity overseas in order to provide foreign teachers and students with the communication skills they need to participate in the global economy;
- allow students and teachers at host institutions to benefit from the Fellows' and Specialists' expertise and to gain a better understanding of American values, representative government, free enterprise, and the rule of law.

EL Fellows have at least a master's degree, preferably with a focus on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Applied Linguistics or other related field, and a minimum of two years of professional experience in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. During the program, EL Fellows typically serve as full-time (up to 20 classroom contact hours per week) educators assigned to foreign host institutions and may be engaged in teacher training, curriculum and materials development, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction, assessment, evaluation, research, English club or American Corner programming, summer camps, and other outreach projects.

EL Specialists are highly experienced educators and bring, at a minimum, the qualifications of a Fellow plus advanced, demonstrated expertise in the field. EL Specialists undertake overseas assignments where their duties may include classroom instruction, conference presentations, teacher training, and/or curriculum or materials development. EL Specialist project duties often entail serving as a plenary speaker at a regional or national conference of EFL/ESL professionals. Virtual EL Specialists do not travel overseas, but make presentations to overseas audiences and institutions via webinar or other video conferencing technology.

### **EL Fellow and Specialist Program Guidelines**

With the approval of the Office of English Language Programs, the roles and responsibilities of the Recipient administering the EL Fellow and Specialist Program are to:

- Design and develop a recruitment strategy for the EL Fellow and Specialist Program that incorporates up-to-date social media tools as well as the participation of and lessons learned from alumni of the program and partners in the academic community.
- Implement the recruitment strategy for the 2015-16 academic year by conducting an extensive, comprehensive, and ongoing promotional campaign to recruit qualified and experienced candidates for the EL Fellow and Specialist Program. Ensure that there are sufficient candidates to select for approximately 120 Fellows, approximately 120 Specialists, and approximately 50 post funded Fellows or Specialists.
- Design and develop procedures to vet and select the most qualified candidates and to match them to the most appropriate projects proposed by embassies overseas and approved by the Office of English Language Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The selection process must consider academic and professional criteria as well as interpersonal skills and other attributes to ensure EL Fellows and Specialists possess such qualities as cultural adaptability, initiative, resourcefulness, and good judgment.
- Collect Fellows' and Specialists' health verification forms and arrange for proper medical clearance by a qualified medical practitioner. Ensure Fellows are placed in locations with appropriate medical services for their needs.
- Plan and conduct a pre-departure orientation in Washington, D.C. in August 2015 for Fellows. Provide in-person or virtual orientations for Fellows unable to attend

the August 2015 orientation as well as for Specialists.

- Conduct all financial management aspects of the EL Fellow and Specialist Program, including processing of all Fellow and Specialist grant payments electronically to Fellows' and Specialists' designated bank accounts. Maintain Program budget spreadsheet for the EL Fellow and Specialist Program.
- Provide fiscal management for Fellows' professional development activities during the assignment. These activities are selected by the Bureau and are supported by U.S. embassies and the Public Diplomacy Offices of the U.S. Department of State's Regional Geographic Bureaus.
- Make all necessary travel arrangements for the Fellows and Specialists including reservations and issuance of tickets.
- Enroll the selected Fellows and Specialists in the Bureau Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) Benefit Plan or other health benefit plan, as required by the Bureau.
- Monitor the EL Fellow and Specialist Program activities including emergencies, project performance, housing, security, terminations, and making regional site visit(s).
- Prepare and enter into a fellowship agreement for Fellows and Specialists which establishes the terms and conditions of the fellowship including communications, project performance, terminations, and other program-related issues.
- Notify and consult with the Office of English Language Programs (ECA/A/L) immediately in regard to Fellow and Specialist emergencies, evacuations, project performance, terminations, etc., and act in accordance to guidance from the

Office.

- In consultation with ECA and the relevant U.S. embassy and host institution(s), communicate directly with Fellows and Specialists with regard to issues related to, project performance, emergencies, terminations, reporting, highlights, and successes.
- Develop evaluation and implement strategies designed to measure the impact and outcome of the EL Fellow and Specialist Program and the effectiveness of individual Fellow and Specialist professional activities at his/her designated host institution(s).
- Maintain information sharing tools (e.g., website, database, video conferencing/webinars, social media and Community of Practice).
- Carry out a series of webinars for overseas English teachers as directed by the Bureau and manage a social networking community for the participants. This will include purchase of appropriate video conferencing and social media software, recruitment and selection of Virtual Specialists, registration of participants, emailing of certificates, and providing sufficient staff to manage the relevant software, interact with participants during the webinars and act as moderators.
- Provide Fellows' and Specialists' information to the Bureau's Alumni Office.
- Organize and implement the participation of the Bureau in annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Conventions, including: select and rent appropriate exhibit booth space and equipment; provide staff and materials to manage the exhibit booth; recruit potential Fellows and Specialists; arrange for two information sessions on the Fellow and Specialist Program and

make presentations jointly with ECA staff; register Office of English Language Programs staff and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs); arrange hotel reservations for Office of English Language Programs staff and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) and Regional English Language Assistants.

Organize and implement networking events to be hosted by ECA.

The responsibilities of the Recipient are clearly detailed in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI). Applicants should have sufficient staff with relevant qualifications and experience in TEFL/TESL or Applied Linguistics to manage the program. Due to the diverse responsibilities involved in administering the Cooperative Agreement, the Bureau welcomes the submission of proposals involving partnering organizations. In addition to the primary grantee, these other organizations may be sub-grantees responsible for carrying out specific activities or components of the EL Fellow and Specialist Program, such as recruitment, financial and logistical management, reporting requirements, pre-departure orientation, evaluations, clearance of health verification records, TESOL 2015 related activities, etc. Applications involving partnering organizations, if applicable, must clearly delineate the role each partnering organization will play and its responsibilities. Letters of commitment from any potential partnering organization(s) must be included.

In a Cooperative Agreement, ECA/A/L is substantially involved in the program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA/A/L activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

- Providing overall program and policy design and direction;
- Inviting U.S. embassies to submit EL Fellow and Specialist proposals;
- Reviewing and analyzing the ability of projects to raise the academic standards of English language teaching and to promote the Bureau's public diplomacy and exchanges goals;
- Analyzing the prospective impact of projects on host-country English teaching institutions and the likelihood of projects meeting host-country institutional needs;
- Prioritizing and finalizing selection of projects for which the Recipient will recruit EL Fellow and Specialist candidates;
- Collaborating on the design and development of the recruitment strategy and selection procedures;
- Approving the recruitment strategy and selection procedures;
- Reviewing and approving the selection criteria for accepting applicants into the program;
- Reviewing and approving the procedures for matching selected participants to appropriate approved projects;
- Monitoring participants and program activities;
- Communicating and working with U.S. embassies to resolve Fellows' and Specialists' issues (academic, health, security, etc.);
- Reviewing reports of Fellows' and Specialists' activities and projects in host countries, evaluating both the work of the Fellows and Specialists and the impact of the project; and

- Designing webinars to be implemented by the Recipient, moderating webinars and monitoring the social networking community.

U.S. embassies submit proposals to the Bureau identifying opportunities for placement of Fellows and Specialists at host-country institutions in accordance with guidance provided by the Bureau. U.S. embassies are responsible for managing the EL Fellow and Specialist Program in-country.

**The Role of the U.S. Embassies Includes:**

- Selecting host institutions, including evaluating the security of prospective sites;
- Establishing viable partnerships with prospective in-country host institutions that have critical English language programming needs;
- Developing project proposals in consultation with in-country host institutions to be implemented by Fellows and Specialists;
- Reviewing selected applicants' qualifications and making the final choice among approved Fellow and Specialist candidates, in consultation with in-country host institutions;
- Confirming that appropriate medical facilities are available for the needs of selected Fellows;
- Contacting Fellows and Specialists prior to their arrival to answer questions issues related to their professional assignments, and to ensure that they have accurate information regarding housing, visa requirements, security, etc.;

- Conducting an in-country arrival orientation and ensuring that the Fellows and Specialists receive a security briefing by the embassy's Regional Security Officer;
- Working to maximize participants' safety and well-being, assist with locating and securing quality housing, ensuring that the Fellows and Specialists visa/residency status is adjusted immediately after arrival in host country to comply with host-country immigration regulations, and acting as the Fellows' and Specialists' and Bureau's direct point of contact;
- Conducting site visits and jointly monitoring Fellows' and Specialists' programs and activities with the recipient and sharing of information with the recipient;
- Nominating participants for the webinars and presenting certificates.

## **II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement

Bureau's level of involvement in the EL Fellow Program is listed under number I above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2015 (pending availability of funds)

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$12,000,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** 1

**Approximate Average Award:** \$12,000,000

**Floor of Award Range:** N/A

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$12,000,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** October 1, 2014, pending availability of funds.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2018

**Additional Information:** Pending successful implementation of the EL Fellow and Specialist Program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is the Bureau's intent to renew this Cooperative Agreement for two additional fiscal years before openly competing it again.

### **III. Eligibility Information:**

**III.1.** Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

**III.2.** Cost sharing or matching funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved Cooperative Agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, the applicant must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event the applicant does not provide the minimum

amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, the Bureau's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

### **III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount up to \$12,000,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

### **IV.) Application and Submission Information:**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

#### **IV.1. Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Office of English Language Programs, ECA/A/L, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 4th Floor, 2200 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20522, telephone (202) 632-9268, email [esteppj@state.gov](mailto:esteppj@state.gov), or email: [ChanCM3@state.gov](mailto:ChanCM3@state.gov), (202) 632-9287, to

request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to Funding Opportunity Number ECA/A/L-15-01 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from Grants.gov. Please see section IV.2 for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify ECA/A/L Program Officers Paulette Estep or Curtis Chan, and refer to Funding Opportunity Number ECA/A/L-15-01 located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

#### IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. “Application Deadline and Methods of Submission” section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for formatting and technical requirements. The package contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually

after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and

Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing [www.GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.GrantSolutions.gov). To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click “Getting Started-Request a User Account” at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) or 1-866-577-0771.

#### **For Informational Purposes Only**

##### **IV.3d.1 ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State

SA-44, Suite 668

301 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW

Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

#### **IV.3d.1 Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's

goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### **IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program

on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the

first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

#### **IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component:**

ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration, and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be

coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

#### **IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire, or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to be used to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the Recipient will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. The evaluation plan should include a description of the project's objectives, the anticipated project outcomes, and how and when the Recipient intends to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. The Recipient should also show how the project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

The monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes, i.e., the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific intended project results to achieve, and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage the applicant to assess the following four levels of outcomes as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

5. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
6. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
7. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; such as greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
8. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of the monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

The Recipient will be required to provide reports analyzing the evaluation findings to the Bureau in the regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV. 3d.4. Describe plans for sustainability, e.g., overall program management, staffing, coordination with ECA and embassies.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing the budget:

IV.3e.1. **Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients:** All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

IV.3e.2. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. The budget request may not exceed \$12,000,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

IV.3e.3. For allowable costs for the program and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions, please refer to the Solicitation Package and POGI.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: May 30, 2014

Reference Number: ECA/A/L-15-01

Methods of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Find” portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to

two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of

State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

- 1. Quality of the program idea/program planning:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Proposal should clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 2. Ability to achieve program objectives:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 3. Multiplier effect/impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
- 4. Support of diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, and program

evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials, and follow-up activities).

**5. Institutional capacity:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Applicants must be able to provide knowledgeable, qualified, experienced staff in the field of TEFL/TESL or Applied Linguistics capable of interviewing candidates and evaluating their qualifications to be educators, to develop materials, and to conduct teacher training in the context of English as a foreign language, in accordance with the criteria established by the Bureau.

**6. Institution's record/ability:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau Cooperative Agreements as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior Recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

**7. Follow-on activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support), ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

**8. Project evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activities' success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus description of a methodology to be used to link outcomes to original project objectives are recommended.

**9. Cost-effectiveness and Cost Sharing:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other budgeted items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize

cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

**10. Professional expertise in teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language**

**(TEFL/TESL):** The proposal should demonstrate expertise in the field of TEFL/TESL, particularly in the plan for recruitment, selection and placement of professionals in these fields as well as in management of webinars that will reach TEFL professionals overseas.

**VI. Award Administration Information**

**VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated, and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing documents between the Recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and mailed to the Recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

The Recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under the award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

#### **VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Governments."

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations."

OMB Circular No. A-102, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments."

OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations."

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here:

[http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-

425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS).

The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting

requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing evaluation findings to the Bureau in the regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information).

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

**VI.4. Optional Program Data Requirements:** Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information, and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the Cooperative Agreement or who benefit from the Cooperative Agreement funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Paulette Estep, telephone (202)632-9268, email [esteppj@state.gov](mailto:esteppj@state.gov), or Curtis Chan at (202) 632-9417, email: [ChanCM3@state.gov](mailto:ChanCM3@state.gov), fax (202) 632-9464, Office of English Language Programs, ECA/A/L, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 2200 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20522.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/A/L-15-01.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals.

Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

### **VIII. Other Information:**

#### **Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

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Evan Ryan

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Date

Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Department of State

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Kelly Keiderling

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Date

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State